

CLAIMS

1. A method of configuring a peripheral device on a network, the method comprising the acts of:
 - sending a request from a host across the network;
 - 5 receiving a response from the peripheral device, the response including a current configuration setting of the peripheral device; and
 - determining by the host whether to configure the peripheral device, without user intervention.
2. A method as set forth in claim 1 and further comprising the act of:
 - 10 sending a configuration message from the host to the peripheral device, the configuration message including an updated configuration setting for the peripheral device, the updated configuration setting generated and sent by the host without user intervention.
3. A method as set forth in claim 2 and wherein the configuration message includes a data payload.
4. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the act of sending a request from a host across the network includes the act of sending a request via a broadcast from a host device across the network.
5. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the act of sending a request from a host across the network includes the act of sending a request via a multicast from a host device across the network.
6. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the act of sending a request from a host across the network includes the act of sending a request via a unicast from a host device across the network.
7. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the peripheral device is a printer.

8. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the peripheral device is a print server.
9. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the peripheral device is an adapter.
10. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the host is a configuration utility software installed on a device.
- 5 11. A method as set forth in claim 1 and wherein the configuration setting includes one of:
- a network setting and a device-specific setting.
12. A method of configuring a unit on a network, the method comprising the acts of:
- 10 sending a query packet over the network from a configuration utility, the query asking for units to respond;
- receiving a plurality of response packets sent from the units, each response packet identifying a unit to be configured by the configuration utility; and
- sending a configuration packet from the configuration utility to a responding unit.
13. The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein the act of sending a query packet
- 15 from the configuration utility includes sending the query packet via a broadcast to all nodes on the network.
14. The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein the act of sending a query packet from the configuration utility includes sending the query packet via a multicast to multiple nodes on the network.
- 20 15. The method as set forth in claim 14, wherein the query packet is a Domain Name Service Query packet.
16. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the response packets are Domain Name Service Announcement packets.
17. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein each response packet also contains
- 25 the current configuration settings of the unit sending the response packet.

18. The method as set forth in claim 17, wherein the current configuration settings in the response packet are communicated by a series of delimited text strings.
19. The method as set forth in claim 17, wherein the current configuration settings include at least one of a network setting and a device-specific setting.
- 5 20. The method as set forth in claim 19, wherein the responding unit is a print server.
21. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein the current configuration settings include information about a device attached to the print server.
22. A software configuration utility stored on computer readable medium and for configuring units on a network, the software configuration utility comprising:
- 10 program code for sending a query packet over the network;
- program code for receiving a response packet from a responding unit, the response packet including a current configuration setting;
- program code for determining whether to configure the responding unit based on the response packet; and
- 15 program code for sending a configuration packet to the responding unit.
23. The software configuration utility as set forth in claim 22, wherein the response packet contains a plurality of current configuration settings of the responding unit.
24. The software configuration utility as set forth in claim 23, wherein the utility parses the configuration settings and makes a determination as to the appropriateness of
- 20 the current settings.
25. The software configuration utility of claim 24, wherein the utility sends a configuration packet to units whose settings are inappropriate.
26. The software configuration utility of claim 25, wherein the units include at least one print server.

27. The software configuration utility of claim 25, wherein the units include at least one network adapter.
28. The software configuration utility of claim 25, wherein the units include at least one scanner.
- 5 29. The software configuration utility of claim 25, wherein the units include at least one printer.
30. The software configuration utility of claim 25, wherein the units include at least one all-in-one device.
31. The software configuration utility of claim 25, wherein the units include at least one fax machine.
- 10 32. A method of configuring a unit in a network, the method comprising the acts of:
- receiving a query packet over the network from a configuration utility;
- sending a response packet to a configuration utility in response to the query packet;
- the response packet including a current configuration setting of the unit and
- 15 indicating that the unit recognizes the query packet;
- receiving a configuration packet over the network from a configuration utility;
- parsing the configuration packet for an updated configuration setting; and
- changing the current configuration setting to match the updated configuration setting included in the configuration packet.
- 20 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the configuration settings are communicated by binary data.
34. The method of claim 33, wherein the binary data is a series of delimited text strings.
35. The method of claim 33, wherein the binary data is encrypted data.

36. The method of claim 32, wherein an acknowledgment packet is sent to the configuring utility after the new configuration has been accepted.
37. The method of claim 35, wherein the configured units include at least one print server.
- 5 38. The method of claim 35, wherein the configured units include at least one network adapter.
39. The method of claim 35, wherein the configured units include at least one scanner.
40. The method of claim 35, wherein the configured units include at least one printer.
41. The method of claim 35, wherein the configured units include at least one all-in-
10 one device.
42. The method of claim 35, wherein the configured units include at least one fax machine.